

## Standish Shore as a Neighborhood

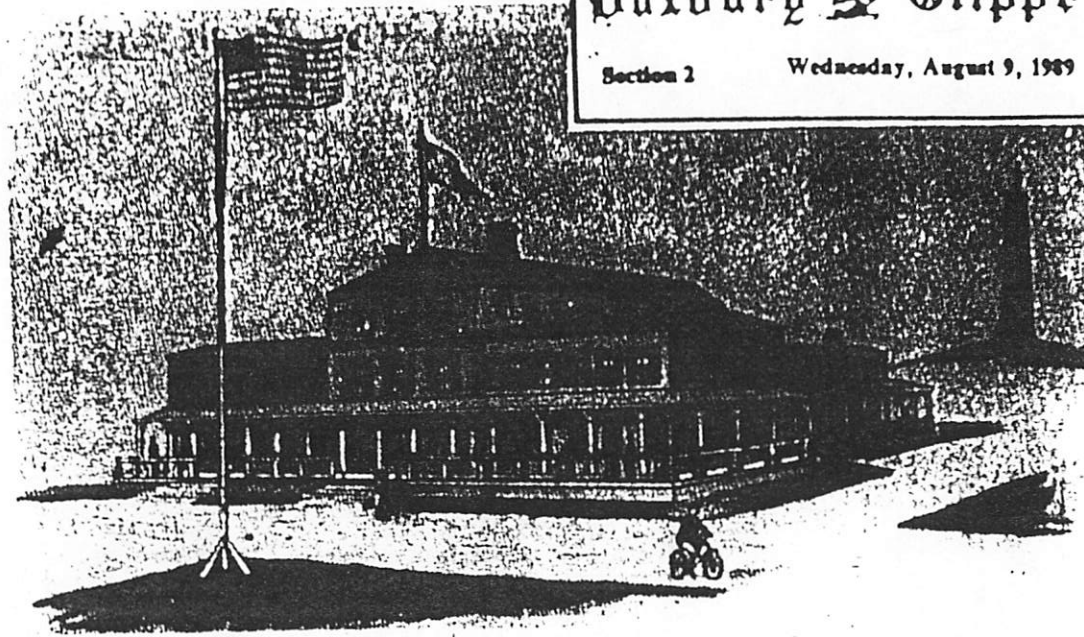
By the REV. CANON ROBERT MERRY

A history buff would be hard put to decide which section of Duxbury was most historic: whether it is the parade ground and sites of the first meeting houses and the cemetery off Chestnut St. or the Blue Fish River estuary which was the locale of most of the shipyards and related industries, or Standish Shore where the more prominent of the Pilgrims settled in their houses and farms. But it is certain that no part of town can claim ascendancy over it. Here is where Myles Standish dug his cellar on the bluff looking toward Plymouth and Elder William Brewster was allotted land to the East now marked by a granite slab noting his lilac bushes that still grace the side of Marshall St. Francis Eaton, the third original settler claimed land to the north and east of Eagle's Nest Creek. Standish Shore, or "the Nook," to give it its original name has had a remarkable history with its times of prosperity, excitement and depression.

My most vivid recollection of my early connections to this area was the sight of the overnight New York to Boston passenger ship of the Eastern Steamship Lines on the far horizon of Cape Cod Bay as I was delivering milk to a customer on Ocean St. The location of the ship told me like the shadow of a sun dial what time it was and whether I was early or late in my daily run. This was during my college summers. I was later to be a steerage passenger on this ship as I made my way home for vacation from the Virginia Episcopal seminary in Alexandria. My ticket cost \$5.

I don't know why these seacoast passenger ships were allowed to be discontinued. There was a time when people could travel by passenger ship all up and down the coast; I remember taking an overnight steamer the first week of August 1930 from Rockland, ME to Boston. It was great to spend the night at sea and arrive with lungs packed with salt air instead of the unburned hydrocarbons we now inhale in the suffocating traffic on the Southeast Expressway.

My subject in this essay is "Standish Shore as a neighborhood" and I would like to clarify this at the outset. It was not a neighborhood such as I have described with its own fire company, school, post office as in other town neighborhoods. It never was a self-contained entity where one could be born and live and die without leaving it, but it was and is today a specific group of people living together in Duxbury, and knowing themselves to be something special.



THE MYLES STANDISH HOUSE

the settlement here. Prevailing southwest winds, a deep water channel coming close to shore at the point where Myles Standish's spring used to lie, and firm hard pan sand on which to disembark.

The first shipyard in Duxbury is believed by many to be Bartlett's on Eagle's Nest Creek Point. As a frequent swimmer at Harden Hill Beach I know how long the tide lingers here. For most of the rest of Standish Shore except for Howland's landing no channel access was practical and the Blue Fish River and Duxbury Bay itself became the location of shipyards and most of the industries that supported them.

The history of Standish Shore can be divided roughly into 3 periods: 1) the colonial period I have described; 2) the summer resort period, and 3) the modern period, i.e. after World War II.

The summer resort period was probably around the turn of the century. The town had celebrated its 250th anniversary in 1987 with a major address by Joshua Winsor and a gigantic celebration in the shadow of the incompleted Myles Standish Monument. Pictures of this event show few houses and barren meadows, there being almost no trees at all. Dominating the entire area and furnishing jobs and income for the entire town was the famous Myles Standish Hotel. This omnipotent building and

## Duxbury Clipper

Section 2

Wednesday, August 9, 1989

Station boasted a "turnaround" for locomotives and double tracks crossed Depot St. so they could switch ends to pull a row of passenger cars either direction. I am not sure but I think it was the volume of passengers going to this great hotel that required this elaborate engineering facility. Sadly enough the hotel fell on hard times and closed its doors some time before World War I. It was later bought by a developer who cut it into 2 sections, each making a perfectly adequate dwelling for a family. They still stand today close to the bluff on the east side of Marshall St.

rum-running period. I have written about this colorful episode in Duxbury's history pointing out the ingenious ways people outwitted law enforcement officials (in one case infiltrating the Coast Guard with its own radio operator who was to warn of the imminent raid of government officials) and almost the entire town was involved directly or indirectly in the operation. Suffice it to say for this essay that the Prohibition law was passed on Oct. 18, 1919, over President Wilson's veto. (He said it was unenforceable and his view proved correct). Enforcement equipment was in place by Jan. 1, 1920, and for 12 years a kind of warfare between this and those who sought to circumvent the law ensued. Ships loaded with cases of liquor would sail forth from Nova Scotia and the

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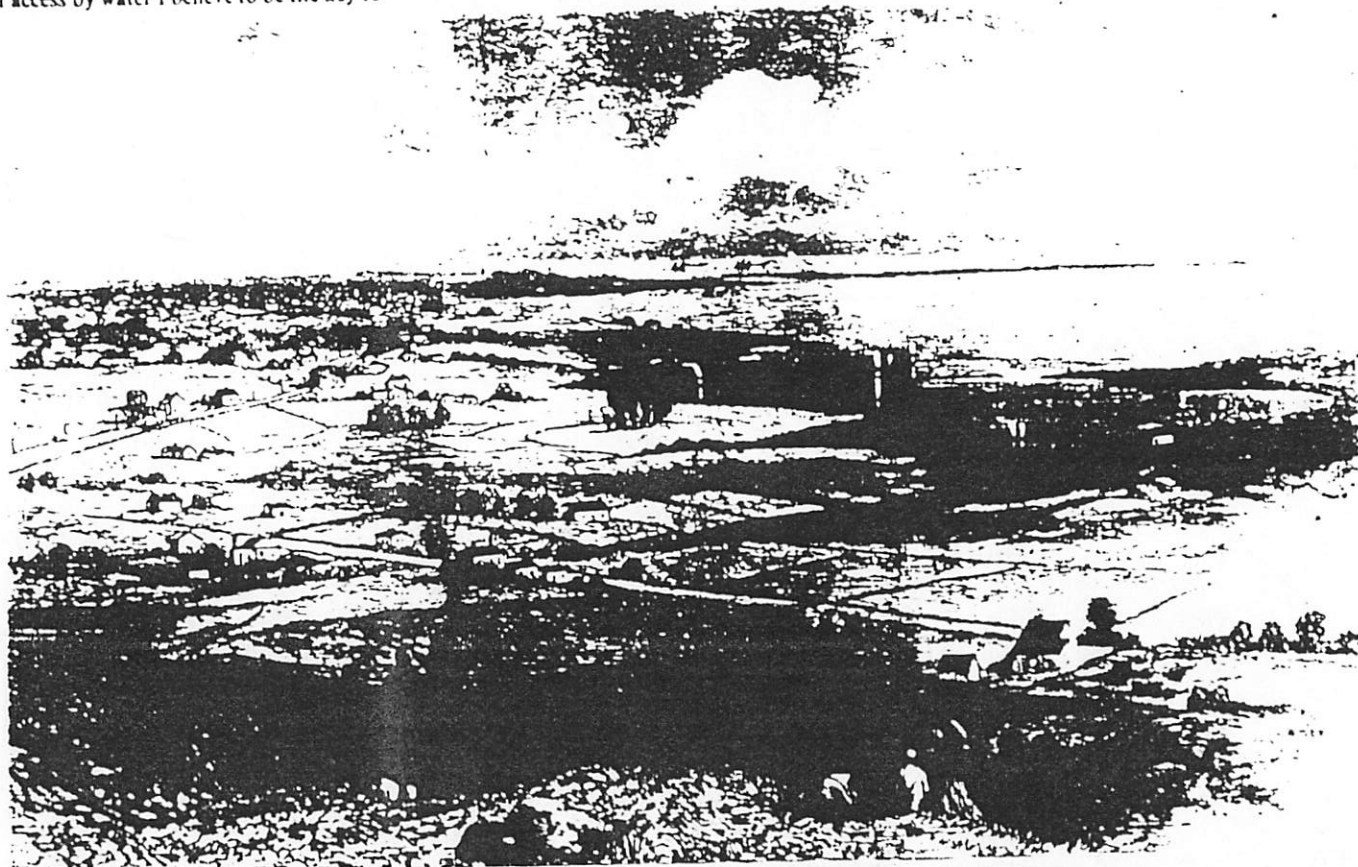
Standish Shore was primarily a residential and farming area at first. The center of the town's life for the first century and a half was what was called for all this period "Duxborough Towne" roughly the area around the site of the Second Meeting House and the Old Burial Ground. Here was the location of the worship center and town meeting, and the drill ground for the town's militia and here is where the dead were laid to rest. How this sheltered area became the town's center is open for speculation. My own imaginative reconstruction of the community life of this fledgling community relies on my years of sailing the channels on this area now called "the Nook" and using the winds and tides to my advantage. Ease of access by water I believe to be the key to

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The hotel boasted that its coach pulled by a 2-horse team met the 12 trains a day that came to South Duxbury station. The railroad had been rushed through to accommodate the 10,000 people who came to assist in the laying of the cornerstone of the Myles Standish Monument in 1871. The South Duxbury

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THE FRENCH ATLANTIC CABLE — VIEW OF THE TOWN OF DUXBURY, ON MASSACHUSETTS BAY, MASS., FROM CAPTAIN'S HILL.

(This sketch appeared in the Aug. 7, 1869, issue of FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER.)



## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Boston Harbor Commuter Service, Massachusetts Bay Lines, Atlantic Cruises and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority will hold two public hearings to obtain comments on a proposal to increase the commuter boat tariffs. The proposal will increase the full adult cash fare to \$4.00 for one way travel effective October 23, 1989. At the public hearings all comments will be recorded and made available to any interested party.

The public hearings will be held on: Wednesday, September 6, 1989 at the Hingham Town Office Building, Meeting Room B, 7 East Street, in Hingham from 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm, and Thursday, September 7, 1989 at South Station, 5th floor, Conference Rooms 1 and 2 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. At these hearings, comments may be given to the effect on energy conservation and the economic social and environmental impacts of this proposal.

Written comments will be accepted through September 7, 1989 and may be mailed to:

Dana Goodell  
Boston Harbor  
Commuter Service  
400 Atlantic Avenue  
Boston, MA 02210

William J. Spence  
Mass. Bay Lines  
60 Rowes Wharf  
Boston, MA 02210

Angelo Mariano  
Atlantic Cruises

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The Trial Court  
The Probate and Family  
Court Department  
Plymouth Division  
Docket No. 89P1196-E1

Estate of:  
GASTONETTE G.  
POLLOCK  
late of Duxbury  
in the County of  
Plymouth  
NOTICE

A petition has been presented in the above-captioned matter praying that the last will of said deceased be proved and allowed and that ANDREW W. POLLOCK of Duxbury, in the County of Plymouth be appointed executor thereof, without surety on his bond.

If you desire to object to the allowance of said petition, you or your attorney must file a written appearance in said Court at Plymouth on or before 10:00 in the forenoon on August 28, 1989.

In addition you must file a written statement of objections to the petition, giving the specific grounds therefore, within (30) days after the return day (or such other time as the court, on motion with notice to the petitioner, may allow) in accordance with Probate Rule 16.

WITNESS, JAMES R. LAWTON, Esquire, First Justice of said Court at Plymouth, the first day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine.

John J. Daley  
Register of Probate  
(8/90)

## STANDISH SHORE From Page 25

I do not recall these days as I was away at college, but I do recall what Standish Shore was like in the years I used to deliver milk and meat there. It was like a large meadow with small brush and low cedar trees scattered about. Brewer's farm at the source of Eagle's Nest Creek dominated the area, with a ring of houses along the shore. Smaller cottages for summer use only were set among larger more permanent structures. The only kind of commercial activity took place along the west side of the area below the monument. Here stood the Hillcrest Hotel and just beyond and using the same access road stood a shellfish factory both owned and operated by Walter Smith. The shellfish factory was a successor to a failed paint factory as this had earlier replaced a factory that made fertilizer out of "porgy" fish. This division in the community life of Standish Shore continued up into the 1930's. It was then that Standish Shore Improvement Assn. was formed with Warren Wentworth as its first president. One of the first acts of the association was getting the town to set aside a mini-park site for the Myles Standish home site.

There followed several years of happy events for the people of Standish Shore as related to me by

James Kelso, whom I talked with one summer afternoon on his porch. I enjoyed talking with Jim partly because I have known him as a tireless worker for the betterment of Duxbury and a leader in the community accomplishments of his neighborhood. He told of the annual extravaganzas that were held, with races and prizes for youngsters and building a float for the July 4th parade.

It was the report of this float that gave Jim his best chuckle. He told of robbing all the freshly blooming rosebuds from families' rosebushes all over the shore and threading their stems through chicken wire rolls and bending them into all sorts of shapes. These designs formed the background and a few well chosen mannequins borrowed by Phil Burnham from Filene's store sprinkled with jewels of imagination from other neighbors often won prizes in the parade.

Citizens from Standish Shore always have done more than their share of furthering the welfare of the town, and assuming leadership positions in the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society. It was Warren Wentworth, whose wife was town historian for many years who initiated the annual summer picnic of the society on Clark's Island, commemorating the landing of the Pilgrims there in a storm as they had been sent out to explore a possible permanent landing site.

Let Us Open Some  
Doors For You!

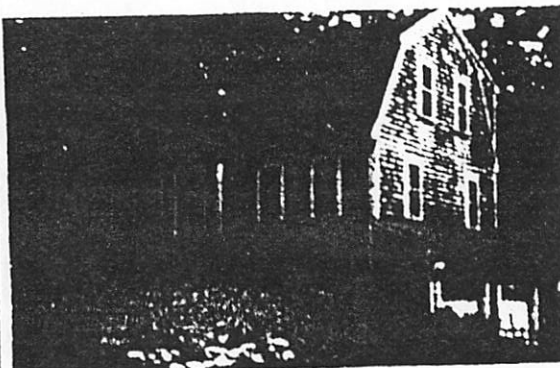


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